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978-0-521-13158-2 - Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694

John R. Knott

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Representations of persecution and martyrdom in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England helped shape a lasting ideal of protestant heroism. This book shows how protestant writers tried to recreate a drama of suffering learned from the Bible and from accounts of the primitive church. It examines John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (the Book of Martyrs), second only to the Bible in importance for English protestants of the period, revealing the subversive potential of the work by exploring how it furnished a discourse of martyrdom for those wishing to resist the authority of the church. Professor Knott also traces Milton's complex negotiations with Foxe and ideas of martyrdom, and engages with the work of the Elizabethan Separatists, William Prynne, John Bunyan, the Quaker leader George Fox, and the hymn-writer Isaac Watts. This is the first extensive treatment of the literature of persecution in Renaissance England.

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For the children: Cathy, Ellen, Walker, Anne

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Suffering for Truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life.

Milton, *Paradise Lost*

The people of God are a suffering people.

Bunyan, *Seasonable Counsel*

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Illustrations

Between pages 150 and 151

- 1 The burning of Master John Rogers, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1641, vol. 3, p. 123 (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 2 The martyrdome of good Bishops under wicked Emperors in the Primitive Church, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1641, vol. 1, p. 1018 (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 3 The burning of Rawlins White, Martyr, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1641, vol. 3, p. 220 (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 4 Godly Christians apprehended about Colchester, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1641, vol. 3, p. 784 (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 5 In bonds for the Testimony of the truth, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1641, vol. 3, p. 403 (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 6 William Marshall, frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike* (1649) (reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library)
- 7 Engraving from Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Piemont* (1658) (reproduced by permission of the Special Collections Library, The University of Michigan)
- 8 Faithful's trial in Vanity Fair, from John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1688) (reproduced by permission of The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. PML 8168)

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An earlier version of chapter 5 appeared in *Politics, poetics, and hermeneutics in Milton's prose*, ed. David Loewenstein and James Grantham Turner (Cambridge University Press, 1990); chapter 7 is a revised and expanded version of an essay that appeared in *Prose Studies* 6 (1983); several pages of chapter 6 first appeared in an essay in *Studies in Philology* 80 (1983). I am grateful for permission to reprint this material.

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<i>A&M</i>	Rev. Josiah Pratt, ed., <i>The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe</i> (London, 1877), 8 vols.
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>ENT</i>	Leland H. Carlson, ed., <i>Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts</i> (London, 1951–70), 6 vols.
<i>Journal</i>	John L. Nickalls, ed., <i>The Journal of George Fox</i> (Cambridge, 1952)
<i>Misc. Works</i>	Roger Sharrock, gen. ed., <i>The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan</i> (Oxford, 1976–)
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>PL</i>	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>